

ASPECTS OF COMPLICITY OF STANFORD UNIVERSITY IN THE WAR

Recognition of the fact that the warfare in Southeast Asia violates our laws and traditions, and has implicated this nation in crimes against humanity, is forcing a re-evaluation of the role of American universities in our society. We have held that scholars should be devoted to the pursuit and transmission of valid human knowledge, and that whatever our individual commitments, our academic institutions must not support more limited goals. Yet careful examination reveals that universities now often further narrow military and industrial policies and provide substantial aid to organizations whose goals are at variance with these traditional academic objectives.

Our entanglement in these questionable activities is the result of long-term trends. For most of our older members, the fascist threat to much that we held dear was so clear that we made our intellectual and institutional resources available to national governments fighting in the common cause. After World War II, scientists and engineers who had made that choice began to look to the federal government for research support on a scale to which academic institutions could not aspire. Under the pressures of the cold war this support took on a military aspect, leading in many institutions, and particularly at Stanford, to direct university commitment to classified military research. Fields of research which strengthened the evolving military technology, and which fed trained personnel into the expanding war industries and government bureaus, burgeoned here and elsewhere. The hypertrophy of such fields was guided primarily by the availability of funds, not by university policy. This pattern expanded into non-technological fields deemed useful to the government: the start of full-scale warfare in Vietnam found even traditional humanistic disciplines such as history drawing support for their graduate students from sources justified by military need (National Defense Education Act).

The gradual development of the military agencies of the federal government as a primary source of university funding rarely was opposed. The military tended to be not only more liberal with funds but also less concerned with picayune administrative detail than civilian agencies; overt political interference rarely surfaced as an issue. Consequently, when the government started a full-scale war without even asking Congress for the constitutionally required declaration, it was doubly difficult to recognize that the universities would not have to pay the price for the easy money they had been uncritically accepting for many years. Many professors still sincerely believed that the universities were neutral territories for literary and humanistic studies, pure research, and professional training, free to follow the truth wherever it might lead, and uninvolved in the partisan conflicts of the day.

The process of uncovering and accepting the fact of university complicity in the war was a painful one. Both the administration and established faculty were reluctant to face the situation. The burden of forcing recognition of complicity into the consciousness of the community therefore fell on the shoulders of activist students and junior faculty. The methods employed were untraditional, but we should ask whether any other approach available at that moment would have shaken us from our lethargy. By now we have heard from counsel who participated in the trials at Nuremberg and Tokyo that our own leaders, past and present, could be convicted and executed if brought to trial on the basis of extant law and precedent. Even with this fact staring us in the face, some of our community are reluctant to press for disengagement of this university from the war.

The steps the university has taken to date toward disengagement have hardly been spontaneous. A small sit-in and the revelation that the university was harboring (in fact concealing) a Central Intelligence Agency project started the

Academic Council thinking about the issue of research policy. Years later, concerned attention was focused, by action, on the ongoing military role played by the Stanford Research Institute in Southeast Asia, and the lack of university control over the activities of that Institute. The issue was brought home by the peaceful occupation of a classified laboratory on campus (AEL). Unclassified documents from that laboratory made it clear that the university had made no effort to reveal (some would claim, had made an effort to conceal) the direct military implications of research in some of our academic departments. The limited response was to change the policy on campus research, and to abandon any hope of controlling SRI by severing it from the university. Although the faculty voted a no-credit ROTC policy during that period of heightened consciousness, the administration came back from Washington with a contract which implemented the position the faculty had voted down. The faculty accepted that reversal; it took a militant anti-ROTC movement and the reaction to the invasion of Cambodia to restart the phasing out of ROTC.

These actions, and the verbal positions taken at the time of Cambodia, hardly amount to a clear rejection of complicity in the war by this university. Indeed, we are so involved that it is a real question whether we could continue to survive in anything like our present configuration if we honestly tried to end our connections with the continuation of the war, and with the institutions which may lead to similar wars even if this one "winds" down and out of public consciousness. Fear that, if we actually disengage, we will lose so much federal and alumni support as to become non-viable as an institution may lie behind many rationalizations which are current, and help explain the substantial number among us who are willing to accept outright political suppression of our most vocal critics, especially Professor Franklin, in the name of "saving the university." But we would betray still further our academic heritage if we did not face this issue openly. The following questions about university policy are intended to show how deep the issue goes.

(1) All Department of Defense contracts last year were legally required to be directly relevant to each agency's military mission. Is there any way we can accept DOD support here without either accepting that requirement or being intellectually dishonest?

(2) Although we are supposed to have only trivial involvement in classified research, we maintain a facility clearance, and over 200 people still hold security clearance directly through Stanford University. Why?

(3) What controls, if any, do we have to insure that unclassified work subcontracted here is not playing a significant role in military programs elsewhere? Specifically, why did work excluded by policy change here get recontracted to SRI, and "acceptable" portions subcontracted back, with faculty approval? Why should the university allow professorial status here to provide a basis for military and government consulting?

(4) Do the recruitment of entering students into advanced ROTC courses, and the new graduate ROTC program, violate either the letter or the spirit of last spring's faculty action?

(5) What controls, if any, do we have to exclude military work from our Computation Center? We know it has already been used this year to plan amphibious landings in North Vietnam. Is there any way to learn when the next such misuse of our facilities takes place?

(6) Should the university own stock or other investments which draw profit from the war?

(7) Should we continue to rent our land to firms engaged in war work?

(8) Should we allow the military and war industries to recruit here, drawing people into positions which we now know may force them to commit war crimes or crimes against humanity?

(9) Can we find a way to provide adequate rebuttal to spokesman for the war invited here for ceremonial occasions, while still giving them a chance to express their opinions?

(10) Can we persuade the administration that one primary task at this point in history is to disengage the university from complicity in the war, and that political suppression of vocal opponents of the war must be abandoned?